

**Opening Statement for Republican Leader Greg Walden
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce hearing on
“Legislation to Promote the Health and Safety of Racehorses”
January 28, 2020**

As Prepared for Delivery

Good Morning and welcome to the Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee legislative hearing on H.R. 1754, the Horseracing Integrity Act of 2019.

I want to first extend a warm welcome to our distinguished panel for joining us today. Protecting the health of horses is important to all of us in this room and evokes strong passions. We all want to do what is best, we just disagree on what that is.

From the Pacific Northwest to the renowned racetracks in Kentucky, New York, and New Jersey, horses hold a special place in our lives, our culture, and our local economies. In my district alone, roughly 50,000 people travel to Pendleton, Oregon to participate in the world-famous Pendleton Round-Up rodeo. Prineville, Oregon is home to local horse races at the Crooked River Round-Up. Many communities across rural Oregon hold rodeos and races throughout the year. So, I am no stranger to the important role horses and horseracing play in our lives.

Last Congress, we held a similar legislative hearing on then-H.R. 2651, the Horse Racing Integrity Act of 2017, and discussed many of the same issues we will explore today. This hearing is also very timely. Within the past 13 months, a number of horses have tragically died at the Santa Anita racetrack in Los Angeles, California. Now, I understand those deaths are not likely tied to Lasix or necessarily captured by this legislation, but the welfare of horses certainly is top of mind.

Today, we will hear from a diverse panel that covers all facets of the industry and I hope we will hear from you how your industry is currently regulated, what can be done to better protect horses, how this legislation will impact your industry, and if there have been any industry-led efforts to try to resolve some of the issues we discussed last Congress.

You all are experts in your field and your insights are very valuable to us. Thank you for being here today and I am looking forward to your perspectives on this.